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1                   UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
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4                   BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS  
5                   AND INTERFERENCES  
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8                   *Ex parte* MARK A. FELKEY,  
9                   TYLER J. WEST,  
10                  SUSAN O. DIEMER,  
11                  MICHAEL E. MARCELLIN,  
12                  DIANE L. SABATINI,  
13                  ELAINE S. MASON,  
14                  DAVID K. BRAVERMAN, and  
15                  PATRICIA A. BOYER  
16

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18                  Appeal 2009-005423  
19                  Application 10/051,282  
20                  Technology Center 3600  
21

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22                  Decided: December 22, 2009  
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26                  Before HUBERT C. LORIN, ANTON W. FETTING, and BIBHUR.  
27                  MOHANTY, *Administrative Patent Judges*.  
28                  FETTING, *Administrative Patent Judge*.

29                   DECISION ON APPEAL  
30

1 STATEMENT OF THE CASE

2 Mark A. Felkey, Tyler J. West, Susan O. Diemer, Michael E. Marcellin,  
3 Diane L. Sabatini, Elaine S. Mason, David K. Braverman, and Patricia A.  
4 Boyer (Appellants) seek review under 35 U.S.C. § 134 (2002) of a final  
5 rejection of claims 1-15, 17, 21-23, 27-30, 32-36, 40, and 41, the only claims  
6 pending in the application on appeal.

7 We have jurisdiction over the appeal pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 6(b)  
8 (2002).

9 SUMMARY OF DECISION<sup>1</sup>

10 We AFFIRM and ENTER A NEW GROUND OF REJECTION  
11 PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. §41.50(b).

12 THE INVENTION

13 The Appellants invented a method and system for procuring  
14 telecommunications offerings on-line (Specification ¶ 02).

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<sup>1</sup> Our decision will make reference to the Appellants' Appeal Brief ("App. Br.," filed March 22, 2008) and Reply Brief ("Reply Br.," filed July 25, 2008), and the Examiner's Answer ("Ans.," mailed June 17, 2008), and Final Rejection ("Final Rej.," mailed February 9, 2007).

1 An understanding of the invention can be derived from a reading of  
2 exemplary claims 1, 5, 27, 37, and 40, which are reproduced below  
3 [bracketed matter and some paragraphing added].

4 1. A computer-implemented method for procuring  
5 telecommunications offerings, comprising:

6 [1] receiving a procurement inquiry from a customer  
7 application, the procurement inquiry specifying a selected  
8 telecommunications offering from a plurality of offerings  
9 including voice service, data access service and mobile  
10 telecommunications service;

11 [2] providing an option for accessing a network consultant  
12 via instant messaging;

13 [3] generating procurement data in response to the  
14 procurement inquiry; and

15 [4] transmitting the procurement data to the customer  
16 application.

17  
18 5. The method of claim 2, further comprising: transmitting the  
19 ordering data including at least one of shopping cart data, or  
20 order entry data.

21  
22 27. A system for procuring and servicing telecommunications  
23 offerings, comprising:

24 [1] a customer browser loaded on a customer client  
25 computer, the customer browser being configured to submit a  
26 procurement inquiry specifying a selected telecommunications  
27 offering from among a voice service offering, a data access  
28 service offering and a mobile telecommunications offering;

29 [2] a back office browser loaded on a back office client  
30 computer, the back office browser being configured to submit a  
31 service inquiry specifying a search criteria with respect to an  
32 order for a telecommunications offering, wherein a customer  
33 agent assigned for servicing a telecommunications offering

1       order is available via instant messaging with the customer client  
2       computer; and

3       [3]     a server program loaded on a server computer and being  
4       configured to receive the procurement and service inquiries,  
5       generate procurement data pertaining to the selected  
6       telecommunications offering and service data pertaining to the  
7       search criteria, and transmit the procurement and service data.

8

9       37. An method for provisioning services via an on-line system,  
10      the method comprising:

- 11       [1]     transmitting a service inquiry from a user;
- 12       [2]     selectively directing the user to a service center;
- 13       [3]     selectively providing a plurality of service options to the  
14       user;
- 15       [4]     generating a service order based upon the step of  
16       selectively providing the plurality of service options; and
- 17       [5]     confirming the service order.

18

19       40. A method for electronic provisioning of telecommunication  
20      services, the method comprising:

- 21       [1]     providing a plurality of options to communicate with a  
22       consultant during the provisioning, wherein the options include  
23       instant messaging and on-line shared white-boarding, wherein  
24       the option is displayed via a customer application to a user;
- 25       [2]     receiving input from the customer application, the input  
26       specifying one or more selections of a plurality of  
27       telecommunication products;
- 28       [3]     determining whether the selection is valid during the  
29       provisioning; and
- 30       [4]     generating an order for the selection based on the  
31       determining step.

32

## THE REJECTIONS

2 The Examiner relies upon the following prior art:

Sridhar	US 6,098,108	Aug. 1, 2000
Guidice	US 6,463,420 B1	Oct. 8, 2002
Bansal	US 6,788,949 B1	Sep. 7, 2004
Liljestrand	US 6,853,714 B2	Feb. 8, 2005
Bednarek	US 6,965,868 B1	Nov. 15, 2005

3

4 Claims 1-15, 17, 21-23, and 40-41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101.  
5 as being directed towards non-statutory subject matter.

§ 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand and Bednarek.

8 Claims 5 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable  
9 over Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Guidice.

10 Claims 27-30 and 32-34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as  
11 unpatentable over Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Sridhar.

12 Claims 40 and 41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as  
13 unpatentable over Liljestrand and Bansal.

14

## ISSUES

16 The issues pertinent to this appeal are:

17 • Whether the Appellants have sustained the burden of showing that the  
18 Examiner erred in rejecting claims 1-15, 17, 21-23, and 40-41 under

1        35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed towards non-statutory subject  
2        matter.

3              ○ This pertinent issue turns on whether the claimed methods  
4              satisfy the machine-or-transformation test.

5        • Whether the Appellants have sustained the burden of showing that the  
6              Examiner erred in rejecting claims 1-4, 7-15, 17, 21-23, 35, and 36  
7              under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand and  
8              Bednarek.

9              ○ This pertinent issue turns on whether Liljestrand describes  
10             limitations [1], [3], and [4] and further where there is a  
11             motivation to combine Liljestrand and Bednarek.

12        • Whether the Appellants have sustained the burden of showing that the  
13              Examiner erred in rejecting claims 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)  
14              as unpatentable over Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Guidice.

15              ○ This pertinent issue turns on whether there is a motivation to  
16              combine Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Guidice.

17        • Whether the Appellants have sustained the burden of showing that the  
18              Examiner erred in rejecting claims 27-30 and 32-34 under 35 U.S.C.  
19              § 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Sridhar.

20              ○ This pertinent issue turns on whether there is a motivation to  
21              combine Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Sridhar.

22        • Whether the Appellants have sustained the burden of showing that the  
23              Examiner erred in rejecting claims 40 and 41 under 35 U.S.C.  
24              § 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand and Bansal.

1           ○ This pertinent issue turns on whether there is a motivation to  
2           combine Liljestrand and Bansal.

3

4           **FACTS PERTINENT TO THE ISSUES**

5       The following enumerated Findings of Fact (FF) are believed to be  
6       supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

7       *Facts Related to the Prior Art*

8       *Sridhar*

9       01. Sridhar is directed to distributed directory of information  
10       related to enhanced communication between computers over a  
11       data network (Sridhar 1:10-15).

12       02. A client system accesses a distributed directory in order to  
13       determine whether a communication path to the server computer  
14       can use an enhanced communication approach (Sridhar 5:11-19).  
15       The remote system is configured to accept communication sent  
16       over the network to a first address using a first communication  
17       approach (Sridhar 5:28-31). The local computer accepts a first  
18       network address for communicating with the remote system and  
19       determines information related to the remote system (Sridhar  
20       5:33-36). The determined information includes a second network  
21       address for communicating with the remote system (Sridhar 5:36-  
22       38). Thus a communication path between the remote and local  
23       systems is established and the path includes the second network  
24       address (Sridhar 5:38-42).

1       *Guidice*

2           03. Guidice is directed to a conducting electronic commercial  
3           transactions over a computer network (Guidice 1:13-14). Guidice  
4           is concerned with increasing the convenience and efficiency of an  
5           electronic commerce transaction by providing for the tracking of  
6           orders within the supplier's website (Guidice 1:66-67 and 2:1-3).

7           04. Guidice describes a system that provides for the online tracking  
8           of orders by providing electronic communication of delivery  
9           status information between different carriers and the supplier's  
10          web site (Guidice 2:10-24).

11       *Bansal*

12           05. Bansal is directed to a method and system for mobile chat  
13           sessions (Bansal 1:13-15). Bansal is concerned with providing a  
14           chat feature to mobile users in order to discuss location-dependant  
15           issues (Bansal 1:50-57).

16           06. Bansal describes a method for transferring a chat sessions  
17           involving a mobile device from a first chat server, when the  
18           mobile device is moving out of range of the first chat server, to a  
19           second chat server (Bansal 1:60-63). Bansal further describes chat  
20           software includes the functionality of text and voice chat,  
21           whiteboard, application sharing, and full-fledged video  
22           conferencing (Bansal 1:30-34).

23

24

1       *Liljestrand*

2       07. *Liljestrand* is directed to a method and apparatus for providing  
3           enhanced telecommunications services to a subscriber (*Liljestrand*  
4           1:15-17). *Liljestrand* is concerned with providing users with  
5           enhanced telecommunication services with voice-activated or  
6           web-activated user interfaces (*Liljestrand* 2:23-35).

7       08. *Liljestrand* describes an enhanced services platform that  
8           utilizes both a voice-activated and a web-activated user interface  
9           (*Liljestrand* 4:13-15). The enhanced services are revenue  
10          generating services (*Liljestrand* 3:54-59). These services include  
11          the virtual administrator features of call waiting and call  
12          swapping, the single number access service features of hard  
13          forward and VIP routing, the unified messaging service features of  
14          email and fax, and the recording service features of recording and  
15          play back (*Liljestrand* 18:Table 1 and 2, 19:Table 2 and 3, and  
16          20:Table 4). Once a user is connected to the platform, a virtual  
17          administrator takes over to assist the user in requesting and  
18          performing all services (*Liljestrand* 4:18-23). Also upon the user  
19          connecting to the platform the system retrieves the user's profile  
20          information (*Liljestrand* 14:27-30). After being greeted by the  
21          virtual administrator, the user is prompted to give a command and  
22          the virtual administrator responds with confirmations (*Liljestrand*  
23          14:51-55 and 14:63-65). The user is able to speak voice  
24          commands to the system and the system will perform these  
25          commands (*Liljestrand* 15:7-11). These commands include  
26          administrative functions (15:50-52).

1           09. Subscriber profile information can be entered, modified, or  
2           deleted by the user using the voice-activated or web-activated  
3           interfaces (Liljestrand 8:40-43). The web-activated interface  
4           further provides user billing information and account status  
5           information (Liljestrand 8:43-44). The web-activated interface is  
6           further capable of automatically creating new accounts for  
7           customers that want to sign up for services (Liljestrand 8:44-47).  
8           General administrative functions include changing the feature  
9           package that the user is registered for (Liljestrand 16:57-64).

10          *Bednarek*

11          10. Bednarek is directed to systems tools, and methods for  
12           promoting commerce in a networked economy (Bednarek 1:15-  
13           16).  
14          11. Bednarek describes a virtual retailing system that incorporates  
15           the entire shopping experience customers use in purchasing  
16           decisions and provides this experience in a virtual environment  
17           (Bednarek 10:18-49). For example, a user can select to discuss a  
18           sale with a sales agent using instant messaging or video  
19           conferencing (Bednarek 11:59-66).

20          *Facts Related To The Level Of Skill In The Art*

21          12. Neither the Examiner nor the Appellants has addressed the level  
22           of ordinary skill in the pertinent arts of customer relationship  
23           management and telecommunications procurement systems. We  
24           will therefore consider the cited prior art as representative of the  
25           level of ordinary skill in the art. *See Okajima v. Bourdeau*, 261

1 F.3d 1350, 1355 (Fed. Cir. 2001) (“[T]he absence of specific  
2 findings on the level of skill in the art does not give rise to  
3 reversible error ‘where the prior art itself reflects an appropriate  
4 level and a need for testimony is not shown’”) (quoting *Litton*  
5 *Indus. Prods., Inc. v. Solid State Sys. Corp.*, 755 F.2d 158, 163  
6 (Fed. Cir. 1985)).

7 *Facts Related To Secondary Considerations*

8 13. There is no evidence on record of secondary considerations of  
9 non-obviousness for our consideration.

10 PRINCIPLES OF LAW

11 *101 - Bilski*

12 The law in the area of patent-eligible subject matter for process claims  
13 has recently been clarified by the Federal Circuit in, *In re Bilski*, 545 F.3d  
14 943 (Fed. Cir. 2008) (en banc), *petition for cert. filed*, 77 USLW 3442 (U.S.  
15 Jan. 28, 2009) (No. 08-964).

16 The en banc court in *Bilski* held that “the machine-or-transformation test,  
17 properly applied, is the governing test for determining patent eligibility of a  
18 process under § 101.” *Bilski*, 545 F.3d at 956. The court in *Bilski* further  
19 held that “the ‘useful, concrete and tangible result’ inquiry is inadequate [to  
20 determine whether a claim is patent-eligible under § 101.]” *Bilski*, 545 F.3d  
21 at 959-60.

22 The court explained the machine-or-transformation test as follows: “A  
23 claimed process is surely patent-eligible under § 101 if: (1) it is tied to a  
24 particular machine or apparatus, or (2) it transforms a particular article into a

1 different state or thing.” *Bilski*, 545 F.3d at 954 (citations omitted). The  
2 court explained that “the use of a specific machine or transformation of an  
3 article must impose meaningful limits on the claim’s scope to impart patent-  
4 eligibility” and “the involvement of the machine or transformation in the  
5 claimed process must not merely be insignificant extra-solution activity.”  
6 *Bilski*, 545 F.3d at 961-62 (citations omitted).

7 The court declined to decide under the machine implementation branch  
8 of the inquiry whether or when recitation of a computer suffices to tie a  
9 process claim to a particular machine. *Bilski*, 545 F.3d at 962. As to the  
10 transformation branch of the inquiry, however, the court explained that  
11 transformation of a particular article into a different state or thing “must be  
12 central to the purpose of the claimed process.” *Bilski*, 545 F.3d at 962. As to  
13 the meaning of “article,” the court explained that chemical or physical  
14 transformation of physical objects or substances is patent-eligible under  
15 § 101. *Bilski*, 545 F.3d at 962. The court also explained that transformation  
16 of data is sufficient to render a process patent-eligible if the data represents  
17 physical and tangible objects, *i.e.*, transformation of such raw data into a  
18 particular visual depiction of a physical object on a display. *Bilski*, 545 F.3d  
19 at 962-63. The court further noted that transformation of data is insufficient  
20 to render a process patent-eligible if the data does not specify any particular  
21 type or nature of data and does not specify how or where the data was  
22 obtained or what the data represented. *Bilski*, 545 F.3d at 962. (citing *In re*  
23 *Abele*, 684 F.2d 902, 909 (CCPA 1982) (process claim of graphically  
24 displaying variances of data from average values is not patent-eligible) and  
25 *In re Meyer*, 688 F.2d 789, 792-93 (CCPA 1982) (process claim involving

1 undefined “complex system” and indeterminate “factors” drawn from  
2 unspecified “testing” is not patent-eligible)).

3  
4 *Obviousness*

5 A claimed invention is unpatentable if the differences between it and  
6 the prior art are “such that the subject matter as a whole would have been  
7 obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill  
8 in the art.” *KSR Int'l Co. v. Teleflex Inc.*, 550 U.S. 398, 406 (2007); *Graham*  
9 *v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 13-14 (1966).

10 In *Graham*, the Court held that that the obviousness analysis is  
11 bottomed on several basic factual inquiries: “[1] the scope and content of  
12 the prior art are to be determined; [2] differences between the prior art and  
13 the claims at issue are to be ascertained; and [3] the level of ordinary skill  
14 in the pertinent art resolved.” *Graham*, 383 U.S. at 17. *See also KSR*, 550  
15 U.S. at 406. “The combination of familiar elements according to known  
16 methods is likely to be obvious when it does no more than yield predictable  
17 results.” *KSR*, 550 U.S. at 416.

18 ANALYSIS

19 *Claims 1-15, 17, 21-23, and 40-41 rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as  
20 being directed towards non-statutory subject matter*

21 The Appellants first contend that there is no case law requiring that  
22 the method claims be tied to another statutory class and the claims are  
23 directed to computer-implemented steps regardless. Reply Br. 8-10.

1        We disagree with the Appellants. The current test for determining  
2 whether a method or process is patent-eligible is the machine-or-  
3 transformation test articulated in *Bilski*. *Bilski*, 545 F.3d at 954.

4        The machine prong of the *Bilski* machine-or-transformation test is  
5 satisfied by showing that a claimed process is “tied to a particular machine.”  
6 *Bilski*, 545 F.3d at 954. Independent claims 1 and 12 recites “a computer-  
7 implemented method” in the preamble and independent claim 40 recites only  
8 “a method” in the preamble. As such, claim 40 does not recite any machine,  
9 much less a particular machine. The remaining bodies of claims 1 and 12  
10 fail to recite any further structure and the recitation of “a computer-  
11 implemented method” in the preamble is merely a nominal recitation of a  
12 computer or machine. Although this phrase ties the claimed process to a  
13 computer per se, it does not tie the process to any particular computer or  
14 particular machine. By this phrase, claims 1 and 12 cover tying the process  
15 to any general-purpose computer. Dependant claims 1-11, 13-15, 17, 21-23,  
16 and 41 fail to recite any further limitations that tie the method to a particular  
17 machine and therefore also fail the machine prong of the machine-or-  
18 transformation test. As such, the claims 1-15, 17, 21-23, and 40-41 fail to  
19 satisfy the machine prong of the machine-or-transformation test.

20       The Appellants further contend that there is a transformation described  
21 in the claims. Reply Br. 8-10. The Appellants specifically argue that the  
22 method transforms a procurement inquiry from a customer application, via  
23 intermediate steps, into procurement data that is transmitted to the customer  
24 application in response to the procurement inquiry. Reply Br. 9.

1        We disagree with the Appellants. The method, as argued by the  
2        Appellants, transforms a data from a procurement inquiry into procurement  
3        data. Reply Br. 9. That is, the transformation only involves the  
4        transformation of data. The transformation of data is sufficient to render a  
5        process patent-eligible if the data represents physical and tangible objects  
6        and the transformation of data is insufficient to render a process patent-  
7        eligible if the data does not specify any particular type or nature of data and  
8        does not specify how or where the data was obtained or what the data  
9        represented. *Bilski*, 545 F.3d at 962. Claims 1-15, 17, 21-23, and 40-41  
10      recite a method for procuring telecommunications offerings. The data in  
11     these claims is procurement inquiry data and procurement data. Inquiry data  
12     and procurement data do not represent physical and tangible objects.  
13     Inquiry and procurement data merely represent information and are not  
14     physical entities. As such, the recited methods are insufficient to render this  
15     method for procuring telecommunications offerings patent-eligible.

16        The Appellants have not sustained the burden of showing that the  
17      Examiner erred in rejecting claims 1-15, 17, 21-23, and 40-41 under 35  
18      U.S.C. § 101 as being directed towards non-statutory subject matter.

19

20                  *Claims 1-4, 7-15, 17, 21-23, 35, and 36 rejected under 35 U.S.C. §*  
21                  *103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand and Bednarek*

22        The Appellants first contend that (1) Liljestrand fails to describe  
23        limitation [1] of claim 1, specifically because Liljestrand fails to describe a  
24        procurement inquiry by a customer application as required by claims 1, 12,  
25        21, 35, and 36. App. Br. 8-9 and Reply Br. 3-7. We disagree with the

1 Appellants. Limitation [1] requires that receiving a procurement inquiry  
2 from a customer that specifies a selected telecommunication offering.  
3 Liljestrand describes a system that provides revenue generating, enhanced  
4 telecommunications services to users. FF 08. The system allows users to  
5 submit requests through a voice-activated or web-activated interface. FF 08.  
6 A web-activated interface is the same as at a browser on the user's  
7 computer. The system then receives the user's commands and performs the  
8 requested action. FF 08. A user can also request which services to be  
9 associated with the user's account. FF 09. That is, Liljestrand describes  
10 receiving requests from users, where the requests can include administrative  
11 functions such as selecting new telecommunication services to be associated  
12 with the user's account. As such, Liljestrand describes limitation [1] of  
13 claim 1.

14 The Appellants further contend that the Examiner has given an unduly  
15 broad and unreasonable interpretation to the claims, specifically because it is  
16 unreasonable to conclude that procurement limitations are broad enough to  
17 read on the mere disclosure of any system providing telecommunications  
18 services and charging for the services. App. Br. 10 and Reply Br. 4-5, 7.  
19 We disagree with the Appellants. The specification does not provide for a  
20 special definition for "procurement." The plain and ordinary meaning of  
21 procurement is the act of obtaining. The Examiner construes Liljestrand's  
22 description of requesting or inquiring the system for services and the  
23 providing of those services to the user as an act of obtaining services from  
24 the system. This is a reasonable construction of the term and is consistent  
25 with the plain and ordinary meaning of procurement. The act of requesting a  
26 service is functionally the same as inquiring about procuring the service.

1 The Examiner's construction of the phrase generating procurement data as  
2 adding a service to a user's account, generating a bill for the service, and  
3 providing the service to the user is also reasonable under the broadest  
4 interpretation. As such, the Examiner's construction of a procurement  
5 inquiry and procurement data is reasonable and proper.

6 The Appellants also contend that (2) Liljestrand fails to describe  
7 limitation [3] of claim 1 (App. Br. 9) and (3) Liljestrand fails to describe  
8 limitation [4]. We disagree with the Appellants. Limitation [3] requires  
9 generating procurement data in response to the procurement inquiry.  
10 Limitation [4] further requires transmitting the procurement data to the  
11 customer. As discussed *supra*, the Examiner has construed the phrase  
12 generating procurement data, from limitation [3], as adding a service to a  
13 user's account, generating a bill for the service, and providing the service to  
14 user. We found this construction to be reasonable. Liljestrand describes the  
15 functionality of allowing a user to add an enhanced service to the user's  
16 account for which the user will be billed and providing that service to the  
17 user. FF 08-09. Providing the service to the user is the same as transmitting  
18 procurement data to the customer. As such, Liljestrand describes limitations  
19 [3] and [4] of claim 1.

20 The Appellants even further contend that (4) Liljestrand fails to describe  
21 that a selected telecommunications offering from a plurality of offerings.  
22 Reply Br. 4. Specifically, the Appellants contend that Liljestrand does not  
23 suggest any menu of offerings from which a customer application makes a  
24 selection. We disagree with the Appellants. The independent claims do not  
25 require a feature of a menu of offerings from which a customer application  
26 makes a selection and therefore the argument that Liljestrand fails to

1 describe a menu of offerings is not persuasive. As such, we find no reason  
2 to read this limitation in to the claims. Furthermore, Liljestrand describes  
3 several enhanced services that are available for a user to select from such as  
4 those described in tables 1-4. FF 08. As such, the availability of these  
5 services for a user to select from is selecting an offering from a plurality of  
6 offerings.

7 The Appellants further contend that (5) there is no motivation to  
8 combine Liljestrand and Bednarek. Reply Br. 6. We disagree with the  
9 Appellants. Liljestrand is concerned with providing users with enhanced  
10 services. FF 07. Liljestrand accomplishes this by providing a system that  
11 allows users to utilize a voice-activated or a web-activated interface in using  
12 and purchasing enhanced services. FF 08-09. Bednarek is also concern with  
13 the promotion of commerce and Bednarek accomplishes this by providing a  
14 system with enhanced features that simulate the overall real-world shopping  
15 experience in a virtual environment. FF 10-11. For example, Bednarek  
16 simulates the real-world experience of shopping with a sales agent by  
17 providing communication with a sales agent using instant messaging or  
18 video conferencing. FF 11. A person with ordinary skill in the art would  
19 have recognized to combine Liljestrand and Bednarek in order to increase  
20 customer service and customer relationships by including an option for  
21 accessing a network consultant or sales agent via instant messaging.  
22 Liljestrand and Bednarek are concern with the same type of problem and a  
23 person with ordinary skill in the art would have been lead to combine their  
24 teachings.

1       The Appellants have not sustained the burden of showing that the  
2      Examiner erred in rejecting claims 1-4, 7-15, 17, 21-23, 35, and 36 under 35  
3      U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand and Bednarek.

4

5           *Claims 5 and 6 rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over*  
6           *Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Guidice*

7       The Appellants first contend that (1) Liljestrand fail to describe the  
8      features of a procurement inquiry, a generation of procurement data, and a  
9      transmission of the procurement data for the same reasons argued *supra*.  
10     App. Br. 12. We disagree with the Appellants. These arguments were not  
11     found persuasive *supra* and are not found persuasive here for the same  
12     reasons.

13       The Appellants further contend that (2) there is no reason to combine  
14     Guidice to Liljestrand and Bednarek to include the feature of a shopping  
15     cart. App. Br. 12-13 and Reply Br. 6. We disagree with the Appellants. As  
16     discussed *supra*, Liljestrand and Bednarek are concerned with providing  
17     users with enhanced services (FF 07) and accomplish this by providing a  
18     system that allows users to utilize a voice-activated or web-activated  
19     interface in using and purchasing enhanced services (FF 08 and FF 09) and a  
20     system with enhanced features that simulate the overall real-world shopping  
21     experience in a virtual environment (FF 10 and FF 11). Guidice is also  
22     concerned with providing users with the enhanced services and specifically  
23     concerned with providing users with a system that has enhanced tracking  
24     services. FF 03. Guidice accomplishes this by providing a system that  
25     provides for the online tracking of orders by providing electronic

1 communication of delivery status information between different carriers and  
2 the supplier's web site. FF 04. A person with ordinary skill in the art would  
3 have recognized the benefit of enhancing order tracking services by enabling  
4 users to track the shipping status of orders on the supplier's web site. A  
5 person with ordinary skill in the art would have found it obvious to combine  
6 Guidice to Liljestrand and Bednarek in order achieve this benefit. As such,  
7 Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Guidice are concerned with the same problem  
8 and a person with ordinary skill in the art would have been lead to combine  
9 their teachings.

10 The Appellants have not sustained the burden of showing that the  
11 Examiner erred in rejecting claims 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as  
12 unpatentable over Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Guidice.

13

14         *Claims 27-30 and 32-34 rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as  
15 unpatentable over Liljestrand, Bednarck, and Sridhar*

16 The Appellants first contend that (1) Liljestrand fail to describe the  
17 features of a procurement inquiry, a generation of procurement data, and a  
18 transmission of the procurement data for the same reasons argued *supra* and  
19 Sridhar fails to provide for these deficiencies. App. Br. 13. We disagree  
20 with the Appellants. These arguments were not found persuasive *supra* and  
21 are not found persuasive here for the same reasons.

22 Furthermore, the Appellants argument that Sridhar fails to describe these  
23 features is not persuasive because Appellants are responding to the rejection  
24 by attacking the references separately, even though the rejection is based on  
25 the combined teachings of the references. Nonobviousness cannot be

1 established by attacking the references individually when the rejection is  
2 predicated upon a combination of prior art disclosures. *See In re Merck &*  
3 *Co. Inc.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 1097, (Fed. Cir. 1986).

4 The Appellants further contend that (2) there is no reason to combine  
5 Sridhar to Liljestrand and Bednarek. App. Br. 13-14. We disagree with the  
6 Appellants. As discussed *supra*, Liljestrand and Bednarek are concerned  
7 with providing users with enhanced services (FF 07) and accomplish this by  
8 providing a system that allows users to utilize a voice-activated or web-  
9 activated interface in using and purchasing enhanced services (FF 08 and FF  
10 09) and a system with enhanced features that simulate the overall real-world  
11 shopping experience in a virtual environment (FF 10 and FF 11). Sridhar is  
12 also concerned with providing enhanced user services. FF 01. Sridhar  
13 accomplishes this by providing a system that includes an enhanced  
14 communication approach between two computer systems. FF 02. A person  
15 with ordinary skill in the art would have recognized to combine Sridhar to  
16 Liljestrand and Bednarek in order to enhance computer communication by  
17 implementing the features of having a customer browser loaded on a  
18 customer client computer, a back office browser loaded on a back office  
19 client computer, and having the server program communicate according to a  
20 communication protocol architecture. As such, a person with ordinary skill  
21 in the art would have been lead to combine Sridhar to Liljestrand and  
22 Bednarek and would have found their combination obvious.

23 The Appellants have not sustained the burden of showing that the  
24 Examiner erred in rejecting claims 27-30 and 32-34 under 35 U.S.C.  
25 § 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Sridhar.

*Claims 40 and 41 rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand and Bansal*

The Appellants first contend that (1) Liljestrand fails to describe the features of a procurement inquiry, a generation of procurement data, and a transmission of the procurement data for the same reasons argued *supra* and Bansal fails to provide for these deficiencies. App. Br. 15. We disagree with the Appellants. These arguments were not found persuasive *supra* and are not found persuasive here for the same reasons.

Furthermore, the Appellants argument that Sridhar fails to describe these features is not persuasive because Appellants are responding to the rejection by attacking the references separately, even though the rejection is based on the combined teachings of the references. Nonobviousness cannot be established by attacking the references individually when the rejection is predicated upon a combination of prior art disclosures. App. Br. 15.

The Appellants further contend that (2) there is no reason to combine Bansal and Liljestrand. App. Br. 15 and Reply Br. 7. We disagree with the Appellants. As discussed *supra*, Liljestrand is concerned with providing users with enhanced services (FF 07) and accomplishes this by providing a system that allows users to utilize a voice-activated or web-activated interface in using and purchasing enhanced services (FF 08-09). Bansal is also concerned with providing users with an enhanced service and is specifically concerned with providing an enhanced chat service. FF 05. Bansal accomplishes this by providing a method for transferring a chat session, on a mobile device, from a first chat server to a second chat server.

1 when the mobile device is moving out of range of the first chat server. FF  
2 06. Bansal further describes that the chat features of text and video chats  
3 and whiteboards. FF 06. A person with ordinary skill in the art would have  
4 recognized to combine Bansal to Liljestrand in order to facilitate  
5 communication by providing the alternative communication means of instant  
6 messaging and whiteboards. As such, a person with ordinary skill in the art  
7 would have found it obvious to combine Liljestrand and Bansal.

8 The Appellants have not sustained the burden of showing that the  
9 Examiner erred in rejecting claims 40 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as  
10 unpatentable over Liljestrand and Bansal.

11

#### 12 NEW GROUND OF REJECTION

13 The following new ground of rejection is entered pursuant to 37 C.F.R.  
14 § 41.50(b). Claim 37 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed  
15 towards non-statutory subject matter.

16 Claim 37 recites “a method for provisioning services via an on-line  
17 system.” Claim 37 further only recites steps and does not tie these steps to a  
18 particular machine or apparatus. Although the preamble recites “an on-line  
19 system,” the remaining steps fail to recite any further structure and as such  
20 the recitation of “an on-line system” is merely a nominal recitation of  
21 structure. Although this phrase ties the claimed process to a system per se, it  
22 does not tie the process to any particular machine or computer.  
23 Additionally, the recites steps are for provision services, including the steps  
24 of transmitting data from a user, providing the user with a plurality of  
25 options, and receiving data from the user based on the selection of an option.

1 That is, the process is directed towards merely transforming data. The data  
2 transformed merely represents information and does not represent any  
3 physical or tangible objects. As such, this transformation of data is  
4 insufficient to render the claimed process patent-eligible because the data  
5 does not represent physical or tangible objects.

6 As such, claim 37 fails to satisfy both prongs of the machine-or-  
7 transformation test and is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed  
8 towards non-statutory subject matter.

9

10 CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

11 The Appellants have not sustained the burden of showing that the  
12 Examiner erred in rejecting claims 1-15, 17, 21-23, and 40-41 under 35  
13 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed towards non-statutory subject matter.

14 The Appellants have not sustained the burden of showing that the  
15 Examiner erred in rejecting claims 1-4, 7-15, 17, 21-23, 35, and 36 under 35  
16 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand and Bednarek.

17 The Appellants have not sustained the burden of showing that the  
18 Examiner erred in rejecting claims 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as  
19 unpatentable over Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Guidice.

20 The Appellants have not sustained the burden of showing that the  
21 Examiner erred in rejecting claims 27-30 and 32-34 under 35 U.S.C.  
22 § 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Sridhar.

1 The Appellants have not sustained the burden of showing that the  
2 Examiner erred in rejecting claims 40 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as  
3 unpatentable over Liljestrand and Bansal.

4 A new ground of rejection is entered 37 C.F.R. § 41.50(b) in which  
5 claim 37 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed towards non-  
6 statutory subject matter.

## DECISION

To summarize, our decision is as follows.

- The rejection of claims 1-15, 17, 21-23, and 40-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed towards non-statutory subject matter is not sustained.
- The rejection of claims 1-4, 7-15, 17, 21-23, 35, and 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand and Bednarek is not sustained.
- The rejection of claims 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Guidice is not sustained.
- The rejection of claims 27-30 and 32-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand, Bednarek, and Sridhar is not sustained.
- The rejection of claims 40 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Liljestrand and Bansal is not sustained.
- A new ground of rejection is entered pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 41.50(b).

1           ○ Claim 37 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed  
2                 towards non-statutory subject matter is not sustained.

3             Our decision is not a final agency action.

4             In addition to affirming the Examiner's rejection(s) of one or more  
5                 claims, this decision contains new grounds of rejection pursuant to 37 C.F.R.  
6                 § 41.50(b). 37 CFR § 41.50(b) provides “[a] new ground of rejection  
7                 pursuant to this paragraph shall not be considered final for judicial review.”  
8             This Decision contains a new rejection within the meaning of 37  
9                 C.F.R. § 41.50(b) (2007).

10            37 C.F.R. § 41.50(b) also provides that Appellants, WITHIN TWO  
11            MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF THE DECISION, must exercise one of  
12            the following two options with respect to the new rejection:

13            (1) Reopen prosecution. Submit an appropriate amendment of  
14                 the claims so rejected or new evidence relating to the claims  
15                 so rejected, or both, and have the matter reconsidered by the  
16                 Examiner, in which event the proceeding will be remanded  
17                 to the Examiner. . . .

18            (2) Request rehearing. Request that the proceeding be reheard  
19                 under § 41.52 by the Board upon the same record. . . .

20            Should the Appellants elect to prosecute further before the examiner  
21                 pursuant to 37 CFR § 41.50(b)(1), in order to preserve the right to seek  
22                 review under 35 U.S.C. §§ 141 or 145 with respect to the affirmed rejection,  
23                 the effective date of the affirmance is deferred until conclusion of the  
24                 prosecution before the Examiner unless, as a mere incident to the limited  
25                 prosecution, the affirmed rejection is overcome.

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If the Appellants elect prosecution before the Examiner and this does not result in allowance of the application, abandonment or a second appeal, this case should be returned to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences for final action on the affirmed rejection, including any timely request for rehearing thereof.

6 No time period for taking any subsequent action in connection with this  
7 appeal may be extended under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a). See 37 C.F.R.  
8 § 1.136(a)(1)(iv) (2007).

9

AFFIRMED

41.50(b)

15 mev

16 VERIZON  
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19 ARLINGTON VA 22201-2909